Australian Government

COVID-19 VACCINATION

COVID-19 booster vaccination information for residential aged care workers

Information current as at 28 October 2021

Australia's residential aged care workforce is one of the most vaccinated around the world. You are leaders in protecting yourself, your co-workers and those in your care from severe illness, hospitalisation or death from COVID-19.

You are now able to receive a booster dose if you received your second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine at least six months ago. A booster dose will further strengthen your protection and the protection of those around you from COVID-19.

From 8 November 2021, the Australian Government will roll out the national COVID-19 vaccine booster program for residential aged care. As part of this program, a booster clinic will be held at your facility for residents and workers who received their second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine six or more months ago.

The COVID-19 booster program has been recommended by Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).

The expert advice is that people are eligible for a booster vaccination if they completed their second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine more than six months ago. Read ATAGI recommendations on the use of a booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine | Australian Government Department of Health .

All workers – including students or volunteers engaged by your facility - can receive a booster vaccine at an in-reach clinic being scheduled for residents at your facility if it is at least six months since you received your second dose.

Added protection for people who are fully vaccinated

Workers who have had two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine can be reassured that they are fully vaccinated. People who have received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine means they are very well protected against serious illness, hospitalisation or death from COVID-19.

A booster dose will boost your immune response and provide an additional layer of protection to further reduce the risk of breakthrough infection (when a fully vaccinated person gets COVID-19 and is at risk of transmitting the virus to others).

When you are eligible to receive your booster vaccination

All residents in aged care facilities who received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine at least six months ago are now eligible for a booster dose.

These residents will be offered a COVID-19 booster dose through a Commonwealth in-reach clinic, like those that delivered the initial first and second dose clinics for residents at your facility earlier this year.

Workers can receive a booster dose at your facility's in-reach clinic if you received your second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine at least six months ago.

Your facility will notify you when the COVID-19 vaccine booster clinic has been scheduled. This will occur in the coming months - at least six months after the facility held its second dose COVID-19 vaccination clinic for residents.

Your facility will ensure you complete a consent form prior to the day of the scheduled in-reach booster clinic.

If you received your second dose of a COVID-19 vaccination less than six months ago, you will not be due for your booster yet. However, your facility will support you to access a booster vaccination from existing channels including GPs, pharmacists or state-run vaccination clinics when at least six months has passed since you had your second dose.

If you have only received your first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, you can receive your second dose of a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at the facility's booster clinic. Your facility will support you to receive your booster dose within the recommended interval (at least six months) through existing channels such as GPs, pharmacies and state-run vaccination clinics.

If you have not yet been vaccinated, you can receive your first dose of a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at the facility's booster clinic. Your facility can support you to receive your second dose and booster dose within the recommended intervals through existing channels such as GPs, pharmacists or state-run vaccination clinics.

I am eligible to get a COVID-19 booster but I am unable to be at the facility on the day of the scheduled booster clinic

If you are now due for a booster vaccine and you are not able to get vaccinated on the

day of your facility's in-reach booster clinic, you can book a booster appointment using the COVID-19 **Vaccine Clinic Finder**.

You can also call the dedicated COVID-19 Helpline on **1800 020 080** (select option 4) for any questions about vaccination and for assistance on how to book an appointment.

Is a COVID-19 booster dose mandatory for workers?

All residential aged care workers in Australia were required to have received a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by 17 September 2021. The date that workers must have received a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine is specified in **state and territory public health orders**.

A booster dose is strongly recommended to **boost your** immune response and provide an additional layer to further reduce the risk of breakthrough infection. It is not currently mandated for workers to receive a booster vaccine.

When COVID-19 vaccine booster doses are recommended

You can receive a booster dose if it has been six months or longer since your second dose of COVID-19 vaccine. The date you had your second dose of vaccine will be on your COVID-19 vaccination certificate.

Safety of COVID-19 booster dose

Common, mild side effects following a booster dose may be like those some people may have experienced after their previous COVID-19 vaccinations. These include a headache or mild fever and generally do not last more than 24 hours.

If you have any concerns, please speak with your GP or other allied health professional.

Type of vaccine to be used for booster doses

The Pfizer (Corminaty) COVID-19 vaccine is approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and recommended by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) for the COVID-19 booster program in Australia.

Everyone can receive the Pfizer vaccine as a booster, no matter which vaccine brand you had for your first two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

You can also receive the AstraZeneca (Vaxzevria) vaccine as your booster if you:
- can't have the Pfizer vaccine for medical reasons, or
- had two doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine previously and prefer to receive this vaccine as your booster.

For more information visit **www.health.gov.au**